

Senator Hatch was a friend, a respected colleague, and a legislator of rare skill. In our 20 years serving together, our disagreements were frequent. They often ran deep. But I always knew him to be a person of good faith who put the needs of his State above all else.

While nobody ever mistook Senator Hatch for anything but a principled conservative, to his credit, he was never afraid to work with his Democratic colleagues when necessary to get things done, and he would make compromises. I was in the room many times when it happened, and I will always admire him for that.

The people of Utah lost a titan this weekend, one that will not likely come through this Chamber again for a long time. My prayers and condolences go to all of Senator Hatch's family and friends, especially his wife, Elaine, and their six children and many, many grandchildren.

May he forever rest in peace, and we thank him for his lifetime of public service.

NOMINATION OF LAEL BRAINARD

Madam President, today, the Senate gavels in for the start of a 5-week work period, and there is much, much that the American people want us and need us to work on in order to lower costs and improve their daily lives. That will be one of our primary focuses. The Senate will also continue confirming President Biden's administrative and judicial nominees.

Today we will vote to advance the nomination of Lael Brainard to be Vice Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. Ms. Brainard received bipartisan backing in the committee, and I expect her to sail through this Chamber with similar bipartisan support.

NOMINATION OF LISA DENELL COOK

Madam President, as soon as tomorrow, the Senate will proceed on the nomination of Lisa Cook to sit on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. Coming from humble beginnings in rural Georgia, where her family fought racial segregation, Ms. Cook would make history as the first Black woman ever to sit on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. Her qualifications are irrefutable. She is a professor of economics at Michigan State, a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Advisory Board, and served as senior economist in President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers. In short, Ms. Cook absolutely belongs on the Fed, and I look forward to the Senate confirming her soon.

NOMINATION OF ALVARO M. BEDOYA

Madam President, this week, the Senate will also confirm Alvaro Bedoya as a commissioner on the Federal Trade Commission, breaking a 2-2 deadlock on the FTC that has lasted for over a year. Mr. Bedoya's confirmation is truly significant. If we want to lower costs, if we want to understand why the price of things like gasoline have surged, then it is important to

break the 2-2 deadlock at the FTC so it can fully examine these issues and execute its agenda.

Every time Americans go to the pump, they just know something truly rotten is going on with America's energy sector. Last year, the top 25 oil and gas companies reported \$205 billion in profits. Earlier this month, ExxonMobil alone reported its highest quarterly profits since 2008. But has any of this translated into lower prices for Americans? Has any of this gone to help resolve our energy challenges? Has any of it gone to increasing worker productivity? No, no, and no.

Instead, soaring energy profits have fueled soaring stock buybacks. In the fourth quarter of last year, oil and gas companies' stock buybacks rose by more than 2,000 percent—2,000 percent.

They are making record profits, and what do the CEOs do? They artificially increase the value of their stocks simply by buying some of it back. That is not why stock should go up.

Could they do something to reduce prices? Wouldn't that help America more? Could they do something to make their oil companies—their workers fare better? No. There is something deeply wrong, deeply wrong about seeing the largest oil and gas companies in the world drench top executives and wealthy shareholders with cash while Americans are struggling at the pump.

That is why we need a fully functioning FTC as soon as possible; so it can look under the hood of America's energy sector and determine if rising prices are, in part, rooted in shady conduct, and I believe they are. For that reason, we must confirm Mr. Bedoya by the end of this week.

And I say to my Republican friends, if you are complaining about oil and gas prices—gasoline prices, one of the best things to do is have the FTC take a look and propose action and act.

On this very same note, Democrats are also discussing and will consider other potential action to beef up the FTC's ability to crack down on potential gas price manipulation. We will have more to say on this as the week progresses.

UKRAINE

Madam President, also in the coming weeks, the Senate must make progress on several pressing legislative priorities. We must, for one, continue helping the people of Ukraine in their fight against Russian aggression.

Last Thursday, President Biden announced the emergency funding Congress approved in March is close to running out, and he is expected to make another request to Congress later this week. Two months into the war, Putin's hopes for a quick takeover have all but extinguished, thanks to the bravery of the Ukrainian people and to the aid that the U.S. and other countries have provided the Ukrainians in the form of Javelins, Stingers, and other critical weapons.

But as we all know, the fight is far from over. We must make sure the

Ukrainian people continue to have the help they need for as long as they need it. Approving additional aid for Ukraine is a must, and I expect swift bipartisan cooperation to get it done.

NOMINATION OF BRIDGET A. BRINK

Madam President, this morning, the President also announced he will nominate Bridget Brink to serve as the next ambassador to Ukraine. Ms. Brink's nomination is terrific news at a critical moment, and the Senate will prioritize her confirmation once she comes before the Senate and move her as quickly as possible. She is needed, and we will not tarry or delay.

The United States has not had an ambassador within Ukraine since 2019, and Ms. Brink is an excellent choice to lead our diplomatic mission as we stand with the Ukrainian people. She is a longtime veteran of Eastern European affairs and has already been confirmed unanimously by the Senate to serve as ambassador to Slovakia. There is no reason both sides can't work together quickly and expeditiously to confirm Ms. Brink.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, in addition to Ukraine funding, I will also keep working with my colleagues to pass another bipartisan COVID funding package. At the end of the last work period, a group of Democrats and Republicans reached an agreement on a funding package, only for every single Republican to vote against moving forward—every single one. Truly disappointing, because this funding is desperately needed.

The best way to keep life as close to normal in case a new COVID variant arises, is for Republicans to work with us to quickly approve more money for vaccines, more for testing, more money for lifesaving therapeutics, and other urgent tools to fight the pandemic.

The longer that Senate Republicans hold out on working with us to approve new funding, the higher the cost will be for our country down the line. As we have learned already, it doesn't take much for a new variant to undo a lot of the progress we have made in recent months.

So in the coming weeks, both parties must come to the table and reach a good-faith agreement to move forward on COVID funding.

It will be vital for keeping schools, churches, businesses, and our communities open if and when a future, more potent variant rears its ugly head.

AMERICA COMPETES ACT

Madam President, finally, this week, the Senate will also begin a formal conference committee with the House to finalize our jobs and competitiveness legislation. If there is anything that Republicans and Democrats should be able to agree on and move speedily on, it should certainly be a bipartisan bill that increases jobs, boosts innovation, and gets tough on the Chinese Communist Party, while shoring up our chips manufacturing here at home.

This legislation has been in the works for well over a year, and I know that Members from both sides want to see us enter a conference as soon as we can.

As the week progresses, Republicans must come to the table and show they are willing to work with us to finalize a vote to enter the conference. Both parties in both Chambers have already announced their choices of who should serve as conferees, so the time has come to wrap up this process and begin a conference.

I hope both sides will reach an accord soon so we can finish the yearlong work of sending the competitiveness legislation to the President's desk for his signature. Our economy and American consumers will be far, far better off for it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, the Senate is now, of course, back in session following a 2-week home work period, as we refer to it. That is when we get to go back home and see our friends and constituents and travel around our States. And in my case, representing 29 million Texans, that entails a fair amount of travel, but it is always good to get reconnected with your friends and your neighbors and your constituents.

I know we are eager to hit the ground running here this week, and certainly, we have a lot to do. For example, the conference committee process for the China competitiveness bill will begin soon, and I am eager to work with the fellow Members of the conference committee to reach a strong, bipartisan bill.

The long list of unrelated partisan provisions in the House bill, though, have no place, in my opinion, in the final agreement, but I am ready to get the ball rolling so we can pass a bill that serves the American people, our economy, and, most importantly, our national security.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, in the next couple of weeks, as we know, we could well see another pandemic relief bill come to the floor for a vote.

I hope this package includes a piece of legislation that Senator PADILLA, the Senator from California, and I authored, that would give State and local governments more flexibility to spend their excess COVID dollars, in this case, on infrastructure or disaster relief.

This bill passed the Senate unanimously and addresses a problem communities across our Nation are facing. And there is no reason for it to be ex-

cluded from the larger package, so I am optimistic.

In the coming days, I hope the Senate will also take action to preserve the use of title 42, the public health title, addressing COVID-19, following the President's reckless decision to eliminate it with no alternative plan in place, which would invite even more chaos at our southern border.

Months ago, during the height of COVID, the Border Patrol told me that title 42 was helpful in repelling migrants who were not claiming asylum and avoiding having to process them on this side of the border. But that was one of the few things, given the huge number of asylum claims that were being made, that permitted them to control the flow of people across the border, at least in some manner.

I am proud to cosponsor a bipartisan bill introduced by Senator LANKFORD and Senator SINEMA, which would delay the end of title 42 until there is a reasonable, workable alternative in place. There is bipartisan support for this legislation, and I hope it will receive a vote here on the Senate floor very soon.

These are just a few of the items on the Senate's lengthy to-do list, but of course the single biggest item looming in the news and on our minds and hearts is the war in Ukraine.

Over the last 2 months, Ukraine has endured unimaginable suffering, and its brave people and soldiers continue to fight to save their country. As Americans, we cannot lose sight of our role in the conflict. Our sons and daughters are not on the frontlines, nor are we obligated by a treaty, like the North Atlantic Treaty, to come to the aid of Ukraine.

But I believe we have a moral responsibility to aid a fellow democracy against this kind of unprovoked and outrageous aggression. We can't just send money and weapons halfway around the world and then pat ourselves on the back and say: Job well done.

As I said, we have a moral responsibility to help Ukraine not only fight but also to win this war. We can't just prop up its forces to continue to take more hits without providing them a plan for them to sustain their efforts in the long run.

Over the last couple of months, folks across the political spectrum have united in support of Ukraine. As a matter of fact, this has been one of the truly bipartisan responses that we have seen here in Congress—bipartisan support of Ukraine.

I have to say, amid so much pain and suffering, it has been encouraging to see people around the world—not just here in America but around the world—stand shoulder-to-shoulder in support of Ukraine.

As we know, since the war began, the United States has provided billions of dollars in military assistance as well as humanitarian relief. This has come in the form of everything from body

armor to helmets, to ammunition to Javelin antitank missiles.

But as we know, more is needed. That was the message President Zelenskyy delivered to Members of Congress. It was a message I heard from our partners in Europe when I traveled to Poland and Germany last month. And it is the same message we are hearing today: Send us the weapons we need to defend ourselves against this unprovoked and barbarous invasion by the Russian Federation.

Daily, Ukrainian soldiers and civilians are being bludgeoned. We need to get them the resources they need to hold the line, and we need to continue to act with dispatch.

Just before the State work period, the Senate passed legislation that would help make that more likely. It was called the bipartisan Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act, which I introduced with Senator CARDIN, that has broad bipartisan support in the Senate, and it passed unanimously here early last month.

This legislation is rooted in the same principle as the original Lend-Lease Act, which occurred during World War II, whereby the United States became what Franklin Delano Roosevelt called the "arsenal of democracy," and we provided, at the time, up to \$30 billion worth of materials—airplanes, ships, ammunition, all manner of weaponry—which allowed Great Britain to hang on against Nazi aggression.

Now, if you translate the amount of assistance that the United States gave our allies in World War II under the Lend-Lease Act that was passed then and signed into law by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, it would translate into more than \$400 billion today.

And I think it is important for us to send a strong bipartisan message that the U.S. Congress supports Ukraine not just for today, not just for tomorrow but for the long run.

Now that the Senate has unanimously passed this bipartisan legislation, it is up to the House. As I said, this legislation is important, one, because it cuts the redtape and expedites the shipment and delivery of weapons. As it stands today, there are a lot of time-consuming steps between the United States deciding to send more resources to the forces on the ground and between the time that the decision is made and the time that weapons are actually received.

As we can see by the devastating videos of this war, there is no time for delay or redtape. Our assistance cannot move at the speed of the bureaucracy.

And equally important is point No. 2. This bill ensures that we can send Ukraine the resources it actually needs, not just what current authorities allow.

President Zelenskyy himself said: Ukraine can't shoot down Russian missiles with shotguns and machineguns. We need to listen to what Ukraine needs and send those items with dispatch.